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ABSTRACT

An exploratory study examined how administrators (department heads/chairs) perceive faculty members, as well as themselves, in the performance appraisal interview. Subjects, 450 faculty members and 200 administrators at a midwestern university, answered an Appraisal Interview Questionnaire in which they rated administrator performance, content and methods in interviews; assessed faculty member role during interviews; ranked interview methods; and assessed faculty member performance during the interview. Results indicated that administrators were satisfied with the appraisal interview, whereas faculty members were dissatisfied with administrators' methods. Administrators had little formal training in interviewing, but the majority considered their evaluations of faculty members to be valid and reliable for determining merit pay. Using the "Tell and Sell" method (through which the supervisor acts as a judge and tries to persuade the employee that the evaluation is valid) and the "Management by Objectives" method to assess faculty, administrators had positive perceptions about the appraisal process, and rated faculty positively on their communication during the interview. Like the administrators, faculty members rated themselves positively on their performance during the interview. In contrast, however, faculty members regarded evaluations as unreliable and invalid when used as criteria for determining merit pay, and preferred the "Tell and Listen" method (in which the supervisor plays the role of judge but encourages disagreement to discover the true feelings of the employee) and the "Problem Solving" method (in which the supervisor does not judge but rather acts as a helper in employee development). (Tables of data and 27 references are appended.) (NKA)

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"Administrators' and Faculty Members' Perceptions of the Performance Appraisal Interview"

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ABSTRACT

This study compared administrator (head/chair) and faculty member groups to determine their perceptions of self and others in the performance appraisal interview. Both groups were sent the Appraisal Interview Questionnaire in which they rated the administrator's performance, contents and methods of the interview, assessed the role of the faculty member during the interview, ranked the interview methods and assessed the faculty members' performance during the interview. The results indicate that while only a marginal percentage of administrators have had formal training in interviewing, the majority indicate their appraisals of faculty members are valid and reliable for determining merit pay. Administrators use the "Tell and Sell" and Management by Objectives methods to assess faculty members, have positive perceptions about the appraisal process, and rate faculty members positively on their communication during the interview. In contrast, faculty members perceive that appraisals are unreliable and invalid when used as criteria for determining merit pay prefer a Problem Solving Method. Like the administrator group, faculty members rated themselves positively on their performance during the appraisal interview. Both univariate and multivariate results are reported and discussed in this paper.

Appraisal interviews generally occur between supervisors and subordinates once or twice a year. The primary purposes of appraisal interviews are to review employee performance, to motivate employees to improve, and to set goals for the next few months.[1]

Past research indicates that appraisal interviews are anticipated with about as much enthusiam as death and taxes, cause discomfort and stress, and appear to be the "Achilles heel of most professions."

Other researchers also have expressed criticism in conducting appraisal interviews. Campbell stated: "Thousands of egos and millions of dollars are affected each year by appraisal practices that are usually developed intuitively."[2] Meyer concluded that government and private enterprises' merit ratings are hollow.[3] Research by Nix concluded that little, if any, training in conducted evaluation interviews is one of the reasons why most supervisors look with dread to the appraisal interview.[4] Schuler indicated that the interview is stressful because it is full of uncertainty.[5]

Several positive studies, however, have been conducted and reported in psychology journals. For example, investigations by French, Israel and Aas and by Vroom confirmed that increased participation on the part of the interviewee leads to increased job satisfaction and a higher level of performance.[6] Burke and Wilcox and Fletcher reported that criticism is a key factor in creating defensiveness, but that interviewees want discussion about job weaknesses.[7] Research by Sincoff concluded that a problem-solving approach creates the least animosity and defensiveness.[8]

In addition, several textbooks focus on appraisal interviewing. Maier stressed that during the appraisal interview no evaluation

should be attempted and that the only goal of the interview is the development of the employee. Lopez indicated that the primary purpose is to motivate the employee to higher standards.[9] Catalanello and Hooper suggested that the interviewer should attempt to convey the interrelatedness of performance measurement, performance development, reward allocation, feedback, promotion and manpower planning.[10] Overall, the primary purpose is to let the employee know how he or she is doing in the workplace.

The review of the literature, both articles and textbook, indicated that Maier[11] is quoted most frequently on various methods of performance appraisal. In his book he described three methods: Tell and Sell, Tell and Listen, and Problem Solving. In addition, Donaghy pointed out that the Management by Objective (MBO) method is used about 50 percent of the time in businesses and industries.[12] Each of these methods is discussed below:

Tell and Sell: The Tell and Sell method is characterized by the supervisor preparing an appraisal, giving it to an employee and trying to convince the employee it is valid. The interviewer attempts to resolve complex issues in a dictatorial, oversimplistic manner, suggesting "do it my way or else."[13]

Tell and Listen: The Tell and Listen method is similar to the Tell and Sell method as the interviewer still plays the role of judge, but the supervisor encourages disagreement to discover the true feelings of the employee. The interviewee has an opportunity to release defensive feelings, and, thus, some upward communication does occur as the interviewee initiates communication with supervisor.

Problem Solving: The Problem Solving method takes the interviewer out of the role of judge to that of helper, and places emphasis on

interviewee development. Erhart, who has written extensively about problem-solving appraisal interviewing, indicated change is an essential part of business and that participation in change is essential to healthy growth.[14]

Management by Objectives: The employee is evaluated by a predetermined set of objectives in using the Management by Objectives (MBO) method. This method is designed to help clarify written and oral appraisal duties. Studies by Levinson and by Lazagna concluded that the MBO procedure provides individuals with the opportunity to be self-motivated by setting their own objectives.[15]

Although the review of literature revealed that some scientific research has been completed and that a number of textbooks have been written on the performance appraisal interview, the review did not uncover any articles focusing on appraisal interviewing in academic settings. Sincoff and Goyer noted that appraisals in the academic environment are used to determine an individual's effectiveness in teaching, administering, committee service, university governance, student advising and counseling, publications and professional society participation and involvement. Assessment of these areas are used as guides for promotion, tenure and merit pay.[16]

Because no previous research has been completed on the academic appraisal interview, this is an exploratory study designed to discover how administrators (Department Heads/Chairs) perceive faculty members and themselves in the appraisal interview. Likewise, the research focuses on faculty members' perceptions of administrators and themselves in the appraisal situation. The specifics of the questionnaire will be disussed in the instrument section.

This study is important for several reasons. First, as already

indicated, no research has been completed that examines the methods and contents of the optimal appraisal interview for college professors and administrators. Second, no research has focused on faculty members' perceptions of administrators and themselves and the perceived reliabilty and validity of these assessments. Likewise, No knowledge of administrators' perceptions of these area is available. Third, research is needed to determine similarities and differences on preferences of interviewing styles.

In this study biological sex groups (male and female), academic rank groups (assistant, associate, full professor), teaching experience groups (1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 20+ years), age groups (25-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 60+ years) and academic groups (faculty members and administrators--Department Heads/Chairs) are used as independent variables.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Are there significant differences between biological sex groups, among academic rank groups, among teaching experiences groups, among age groups, and between academic groups in rating faculty members/administrators on each item of performance appraisal?
2. Are there significant differences between biological sex groups, among academic rank groups, among teaching experience groups, among age groups, and between academic groups in rating faculty member/administrators on dimensions of performance appraisal?

PROCEDURES

A random sample of 450 faculty member and a random sample of 200

administrators (Heads/Chairs) at a midwestern university were selected to participate in this study. Specifically, both groups were asked to rate faculty members and administrators on a number of categories on performance appraisal interviewing. Approximately, 41 percent (184) faculty members and 52 percent (104) administrators (Head/Chairs) completed and returned the questionnaire. Based on the returns the demographic breakdown for biological sex groups was 86 percent (247) males and 14 percent (41) females, for academic rank groups was 16 percent (46) assistant professors, 18 percent (51) associate professors, and 66 percent (191) full professors, for years of experience groups was 16 percent (47) 0-5, 15 percent (44) 6-10, 28 percent (82) 11-15, 24 percent (65) 16-20, 17 percent 21+, and for age groups was 2 percent (7) 25-30, 21 percent (59) 31-40, 37 percent (106) 41-50, 23 percent (63) 51-60 and 17 percent (51) 61+.

INSTRUMENTS

The Appraisal Interview Questionnaire, consisting of five parts, was developed by reviewing several performance instruments.

Evaluation Areas: Part 1 focused on administrators' formal training in appraisal interviewing, criteria in evaluating teaching, research and service, and the reliability and validity of the appraisal interview in determining merit pay. These items were generated by the researcher.

Appraisal Methods: Part 2 was based on a series of conclusions reported in several textbooks and articles. The items focused on Tell and Sell, Tell and Listen, Problem Solving, and Management by Objective methods, and the climate and contents of the interview.[17]

Interviewee Participation: In Part 3 the level of participation, acceptance of job goals, knowledge of expected improvement,

appreciation of new ideas, attitudes toward the appraisal system were assessed.[18]

Preference for Methods: In Part 4 administrators rank-ordered the methods in terms of how they conducted the appraisal interview, and faculty members rank-ordered the methods in terms of their preference.

Interviewee Preference: In Part 5 faculty members rated themselves and administrators rated faculty members in terms of how they performed during the appraisal interview.[19]

STATISTICAL ANALYSES

Initially, frequencies and chi-square analyses were computed between and among groups on each item of the questionnaire. Next Mann-Whitney U tests were completed on Part 4 for ranked data. Then factor analyses were computed on the items in Part 2 and Part 5. Kim suggested oblique factor analyses with the pattern matrix which delineates the clustering of variables to determine the direct contribution of a given factor to the variances of a variable. Multiple discriminant function analyses also were completed.[20] Discriminant analysis maximizes differences between groups of variables included as predictors. Discriminant weights are used to maximize separation and when linearly combined, they differentiate groups. Through this process Cooly and Lohnes contend that the optimum discriminant function is that which maximizes the ratio among group sums of squares to the within group sums of squares.[21]

RESULTS

The percentages and chi square results, reported in Tables 1 through 4, indicate significant differences occurred between academic groups on a majority of items in Parts 1 and 2, for all the items in

Part 3 and 50 percent of the items in Part 5. Significant Mann-Whitney results occurred in ranking the Tell and Sell, and marginal differences occurred for Tell and Listen and Problem Solving methods (see Table 5).

The factor analyses of Part 2 and Part 5 revealed that two factors controlled for 80 percent of the variance in Part 2, and one factor contolled for 75 percent of the variance in Part 5. Summaries of the results are reported in Tables 6 and 7. These factors were labeled "Methods and Contents," "Appraisal Process" amd "Interviewee Performance" respectively.

The discriminant function analysis results, reported in Table 8, revealed that significant differences occurred between academic groups in rating the factors in part 2, but no significant differences occurred in rating the factor in Part 5. The overall multivariate F was significant ($p<.001$) for academic groups. The Bartlett Chi Square analysis revealed the first two disciminant functions, labeled "Methods and Content" and "Appraisal Process," were significant. Over 80 percent of the grouped cases were correctly classified. No significant differences occurred between or among levels of other independent variables in rating questionnaire items.

DISCUSSION

Evaluation Areas: The results of the study revealed that large percentage differences occurred between academic groups. Specifically, 54 percent of the faculty members believe that administrators have had formal appraisal training, whereas only 16 percent of administrators indicated they have had formal training. Approximately 50 percent of each group indicate that a specific evaluation form was used to assess faculty members. The responses to

the open-ended questions revealed that teacher evaluation results, number of articles written, number of articles published, number of grant propsals accepted, service to the department, service to the university and general public are used to evaluate teachers for merit pay. Approximately 25 percent of faculty members commented on the lack of criteria in evaluating them for merit pay. In contrast, over 90 percent of adminstrators perceived that their appraisals were reliable and valid, while only 30 percent of faculty members perceived that the evaluations are reliable and valid.

Appraisal Methods: In Part 2, 80 percent of administrators perceived that they communicate evaluation, stimulate growth, persuade faculty members to improve, encourage upward communication, discuss major accomplishments, human relation factors and the work environment. However, less than 40 percent of the faculty group perceived these occur during the interview. The percentages differences between groups indicate that faculty members were dissatisfied with the methods and contents of the appraisal. For example, over 80 percent of administrators use the Tell and Sell method to conduct the interview, while only 19 percent of faculty members believed they had an opportunity to release defensive feelings. Studies by Maier and by Erhart noted that the primary purpose of the Tell and Sell method is to communicate evaluation and is most acceptable to employees who are receptive to authoritarian leadership. The findings in the study indicate that if administrators' perceptions are accurate, they are using the Tell and Sell method. Interviewees, however, believe administrators are using the wrong appraisal method.

Interviewee Participation: Part 3 focused on a number of attitudinal variables in the appraisal process. For example, only 31 percent of

faculty members perceived that they have much influence on what goes on in the department. In contrast, 92 percent of administrators believed faculty members have much influence. Large percentage differences also existed between groups in rating expected improvements, mutual understanding, improved performance, appreciation of new ideas and attitudes toward the appraisal system. Faculty members, however, disagreed in that they feel administrators plan programs poorly, feel the appraisal has little utility, and that administrators do not appreciate new ideas.

Previous research by Lewin and by Tamayo and Lustig confirmed that goal setting can have a powerful influence on subsequent performance.[23] Other research by French, Kay and Meyer concluded that participation increased favorable attitudes toward the appraisal and increased greater occupational self-actualization, knowledge of expected improvement and job goals, as well as increased mutual understanding and an appreciation for new ideas.[24]

Preference for Method: An interpretation of the results of Part 4 indicates that administrators use the Tell and Sell and Management by Objective methods most frequently, while faculty members believe that the Tell and Listen and Problem Solving methods should be used. Research by Stewart and Cash and by Erhart support faculty members' perceptions.[25] That is, these methods, especially the Problem solving, provide the interviewee with the opportunity to make a job analysis, review the year's progress, and to discuss problems, needs, innovations, satisfactions and dissatisfactions that have been encountered.

In addition, although not significant, 60 percent of full professors believe that the MBO method should be used to evaluate the

-3-

interviewee, while 60 percent of assistant and associate professors believe it should not be used. It is difficult to interpret these findings, but it appears that assistant and associate professors view the appraisal as an opportunity to discuss specific problems that have surfaced during the academic year. Full professors seem to view the process as two peers discussing objectives. Likewise, the results of the first three parts, although not significant, confirm that full professors view the interview more positively than assistant and associate professors. Perhaps this is because they have tenure and, thus, are not worried about being terminated.

Two factors emerge in Part 2 and have been labeled "Methods and Contents" and "Appraisal Process." The analysis of variance results indicate that administrators rated themselves significantly higher on the "Methods and Content" factors and significantly lower on "Appraisal Process" factor ($p < .01$). For example, as revealed in the item-by-item analyses, 78 percent of administrators believe that faculty members have an opportunity to release defensive feeling, while only 19 percent of faculty members believe they have an opportunity to release defensive feelings. In addition, 94 percent of administrators believe that they stimulate growth and development, but only 42 percent of faculty members believe that administrators stimulate growth and development.

Interviewee Performance: Significant differences also occurred between sample groups in rating the "Interviewee Performance" factor. These findings indicate both groups rated faculty members' performance positively. In contrast, administrators rated items focusing on their role positively and faculty members rated them negatively.

The discriminant analysis results reinforce the analysis of

variance results. Specifically, the Bartlett Chi Square test yielded significant differences ($p < .01$) for the first two roots. In addition, over 80 percent of the cases were correctly classified. These findings indicate that academic group is a good discriminating variable.

Post hoc analyses: The reliability and validity items were used as independent variables. These were completed to determine differences between faculty members reliability and validity groups. Specifically, these research questions were generated:

1. Are there significant differences between faculty reliability groups (reliable and unreliable) in rating administrators on "Methods and Contents," "Appraisal Process" factors and rating self on "Performance" factor?
2. Are there significant differences between faculty validity groups (valid and invalid) in rating administrators on "Methods and Contents," "Appraisal Process" factors and rating self on "Performance" factor?

The multiple discriminant analysis with the three dependent measures entered simultaneously produced statistical significance ($\chi^2 = 38.53$; $df = 3$; $p < .0001$; Canonical $R = .60$). The discriminant function classified 75 percent of the cases in reliable and unreliable groups. The "Contents and Methods" and "Interviewee Performance" factors correlated significantly with the discriminant function (r's = .83 and .36 respectively).

Similar results occurred for the validity groups. Overall, the discriminant analysis had statistical significance ($\chi^2 = 39.89$; $df = 3$; $p < .001$; $R = .61$). The discriminant function classified 75 percent of cases into valid and invalid groups. Again the "Methods and Contents"

and "Interviewee Performance" factors correlated significantly with the discriminant function (r's=.77 and .31).

Overall, these results indicate that reliability and validity groups have different perceptions of the appraisal interview. Those who felt the interview was reliable and/or valid perceived that both interviewers and interviewees performed well and rated the methods and contents and appraisal variables considerably higher than those who felt the appraisal process was not reliable and valid.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The results of this study are not generalizable as this was an exploratory study. The results, however, provide new information about the performance appraisal interview in the academic organization. Specifically, the large percentage and mean differences between groups seems to indicate administrators are satisfied with the appraisal interview, whereas faculty members, while quite positive about themselves, are dissatisfied with administrators' methods of conducting appraisal interviews.

Future research should focus on differences between faculty and administrator groups to determine if the results obtained in this study are representative of the target groups. Additional research using information gathering interviews might be completed to determine similarities and differences between faculty and administrator groups. In addition, by using biological sex, age, and academic rank as stratification variables, research could determine if these are good discriminating variables.

Other research might focus on communication style.[26] For example, does an administrator who uses the Tell and Sell method rate precise, dominant, and contentious styles higher than an

administrator using a Problem Solving method? In contrast, does an administrator who uses the Problem Solving method rate open, friendly, and impression leaving styles higher than an administrator using the Tell and Sell method? These, as well as numerous other questions focusing on the four interviewing methods and eleven communication styles, could be tested.

Other studies might focus on communication apprehension of interviewers and interviewees.[27] For example, the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension scale could be revised to test interviewing apprehension. Several questions might be addressed: Do interviewers who have low interviewing apprehension utilize different methods than interviewers with high interviewing apprehension? Do interviewees with low apprehension prefer interviewers to use different interviewing methods than interviewees with high apprehension?

Another study might focus on interviewing immediacy. For example, does an interviewer who uses the Tell and Sell method utilize more immediacy cues than interviewers who use other methods? Do interviewees prefer the interviewer to be immediate?

Other appraisal interviewing studies might be conducted to determine the types of questions that are asked by both interviewers and interviewees. For example, does an interviewer who uses the Tell and Sell method ask mostly closed-questions? In contrast, does the interviewee who uses the Problem- Solving method ask mostly open-ended questions?

Finally, training programs need to be developed to educate administrators and faculty members on the interviewing process, on how to develop an interview guide, on types of introductions and

conclusions, and on types of questions that might be use in the appraisal interview.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study have provided the following composite views of administrator and faculty groups:

Administrators. Administrators use a variety of methods in conducting the appraisal interview, but utilize the Tell and Sell and MBO methods more frequently than the other types. They also perceive, even though most have not had any formal training in appraisal interviewing, that their appraisals are reliable and valid. Moreover, they have a positive attitude about the appraisal process, attempt to create mutual understanding and appreciate new ideas. Administrators also have positive perceptions of faculty members' performances.

Faculty Members. Faculty members have positive perceptions of their role/roles during the performance appraisal interview. For example, they request help in handling problems, ask questions and have a positive attitude about their abilities. They prefer the Tell and Listen and Problem Solving methods, primarily Problem Solving. They believe that the appraisal process is unreliable and invalid to determine merit pay and contend that administrators do not discuss major accomplishments, human relation factors, work environment, teacher evaluations, research and service during the interview. Unlike administrators, they rated Heads/Chairs negatively on the "Methods and Contents" factor.

Both administrators and faculty members believe that academic appraisal interviews should be conducted. More research is needed to determine the competencies of both as participants in the appraisal

interview.

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Table 1

Evaluation Areas

Percentages and Chi Square Analyses of Academic Groups and Criteria Items

Items	Faculty Yes	Administrators Yes	P
Formal training	3	16	.0001
Specific evaluation form	40	52	.19
Evaluate self	31	50	.06
Level of satisfaction	34	52	.01
Reliable	45	88	.0001
Valid	47	84	.0001

Table 2

Appraisal Methods

Percentages and Chi Square Analyses of Academic Groups on Methods and Content Items

Items	Faculty Agree	Administrators Agree	P
1. Communicates evaluation	55	90	.0001
2. Simulates growth and development	42	94	.0001
3. Persuades faculty members to improve	41	84	.0001
4. Profit from criticism	70	62	.7296
5. Release defensive feelings	19	78	.0001
6. Encourages upward communication	53	82	.0001
7. Praise creates anxiety	13	10	.688
8. Set own goals	81	60	.144
9. Job relateness	71	69	.787
10. Create defensiveness	7	6	.878
11. Standardized by form	31	40	.851
12. Little value in improving performance	23	8	.044
13. Stereotypes confirmed	25	14	.220
14. Major accomplishments	40	86	.0001
15. Human relations	34	88	.001
16. Work environment	36	88	.0001
17. Teaching performance	47	94	.0001
18. Current research	54	94	.0001
19. Service commitment	49	94	.0001
20. Leadership, attitude and loyalty	2	2	.72

Table 3

Interviewee Participation

Chi Square Results of Academic Groups
On Human Factor Items

Items	X^2	P
1. Influence in department	11.37	.0001
2. Goals for position	24.75	.0001
3. Programs and projects	37.26	.0001
4. Specific improvements	15.87	.003
5. Mutual understanding	8.71	.06
6. Formal performance appraisals	11.80	.01
7. Appreciative of my efforts	9.39	.05

Table 4

Preference for Method

Mann Whitney U Tests for Academic Groups
on Interviewing Methods

Items	U	Z	P
Tell and sell	695	2.208	.03
Tell and listen	905.5	-.3505	.73
Problem solving	758.5	1.651	.10
Management by objective	760.5	1.629	.10

Table 5

Interviewee Preference

Percentages and Chi Square Analyses of Academic Groups on Interviewee Performance

Items	Faculty Agree	Administrators Agree	P
1. Request help	47	52	.13
2. Ask questions	80	88	.70
3. Take responsibility for objectives	60	18	.0001
4. Suggestions for improving	70	70	.18
5. Materials well organized	64	54	.03
6. Interest in welfare	79	84	.105
7. Positive attitude	74	70	.065
8. Active role	57	72	.32
9. Discuss problems and solutions	61	58	.48
10. Provide information	72	41	.02

Table 6

Interviewee Behavior

Factor Analysis: Evaluation of Administrators

Items	Loadings
Factor 1: Methods and Content	
Should communicate evaluation	.63
Stimualte growth and development	.62
Persuade faculty members to improve	.52
Opportunity to release defensive feelings	.63
Encourage upward communication	.48
Discuss major accomplishments	.80
Discuss human relation factors	.74
Discuss work environment	.79
Discuss current teaching performance	.89
Discuss current research	.89
Discuss current service	.87
Factor 2: Appraisal Process	
Create anxiety	.52
Set own goals	.48
Create defensiveness	.68
Appraisal little value	.51
Stereotypes confirmed	.48

Table 7

Interviewee Behavior

Factor Analysis: Evaluation of Faculty Members

Items	Loadings
Handling problems	.76
Ask questions	.89
Responsibilities for objectives	.79
Make suggestions for improvement	.90
Materials well organized	.83
Express interest in welfare	.93
Positive attitude about abilities	.90
Play an active role	.76
Discuss problems and solutions	.91
Provide information on all topics	.78

Table 8

Results of Multiple Discriminant Analysis: Faculty Groups

Variable	Standardized Discriminant Function Coefficient[a]	Structure Coefficient[b]	Univariate F[c]
Methods and content	1.12	.81	66.39**
Appraisal process	-.52	-.16	2.72*
Interviewee behavior	-.38	.01	.26

[a] The discriminant function was significant (X^2 75.44; n = 183; df = 3; $P < .001$; canonical R = 63)

[b] The structure coefficient are the Pearson correlation coefficient between original variables and the discriminant function.

[c] Degree of freedom equals 1 and 183.

*$p < .05$

**$p < .01$